Things You Said by Browneyesparker

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Summary:

A collection of one-shots revolving around Mike & Eleven and things they say to each other.

1. things you said at 1am

things you said at 1am

you, you can be queen and i, i can be king. . .

She tells him about her time in the labs when it seems like they're the only two in the world who are awake and secrets are whispered like prayers in the dark. He listens as the details are leaked out over super coms during the hours between midnight and morning, trying hard to control his anger.

"There were so many experiments," she says one night, her voice heavy with sleep and dredged up fears long buried with a loving home and a family and friends who care about her.

Mike refrains for asking her to tell him more even though he is morbidly curious. He wants to know everything about her past and try to make it better. But she offers him so little and he doesn't press her for more. He never wants to force her to do anything she doesn't want to do.

"Tell me something good," she whispers a few seconds later.

He weaves a story about a king who finds a queen with no country or castle one rainy night when he was out riding his horse. He rescues her and brings her home, along the way they have many adventures and for a short time, the king loses the queen but eventually she comes back to him.

It is a story without a definitive end, he says in conclusion. But she does not connect reality to fiction. She tells him that he finds a happy ending for the king and queen. Their alarms go off then, telling them it's time to get up and start getting ready for the school day.

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"Water, so much water!" Eleven gasps into the super com a week or two later.

Mike knows her well enough to know this is another snippet from her

past, another experience from the lab at the edge of town. Tonight he is brave enough to ask her to tell him more.

“What do you mean El?” he whispers gently.

“Tank,” Eleven replies. “They would put me in a tank.”

“With water?”

“Yes.”

He remembers from the time they put her in the makeshift bathtub at school, water intensifies her powers. He feels the familiar old anger bubbling up inside him. He feels helpless and he has to remind himself that they are safe.

No one will ever get them again even though they are still haunted by nightmares and shadows.

“Tell me something good,” Eleven requests wearily and he can picture her lying on her bed, clutching her pillow tightly around her waist with one hand.

Mike gathers his thoughts enough to tell her more about the king and the queen. He tells her about how the queen confides in the king about her past and how he wants to save her from it but he is helpless to do so.

“Mike, that *isn’t* good,” Eleven chides sweetly.

“The king likes the queen *a lot*,” Mike says.

“How much?”

“Enough to slay dragons for her,” Mike answers. “Enough to follow her into hell.”

“Did he? When she went away?” Eleven asks, remembering the middle part of the story,

“He couldn’t,” Mike admits. “But he wanted to.”

“She came back?”

And Mike remembers she was looking for something to distract her from the darkness of her past.

“Yes,” he replies. “She came back to him.”

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“I didn’t always get to eat,” Eleven says, they’re lying side-by-side on his basement floor and sharing a carton of late night chocolate ice cream, they haven’t even gone to sleep yet.

Mike doesn’t need to ask why she didn’t always eat. He’s sure it’s the equivalent of being sent to bed without dinner but Brenner probably didn’t sneak her supper like his mother had when he had done something wrong. A secret sign all was forgiven and that she still loved him.

Eleven leans her head on his shoulder. “Tell me something good,” she whispers. “The Queen and the King?”

“The Queen didn’t talk much when the King found her,” Mike answers without thinking about it much. “She didn’t even really have a name. If she did, she didn’t even know what it was. A wicked wizard had stolen her identity, her vocabulary. He’d stolen almost everything from her.”

“But the King took her in,” Eleven replies, knowing enough of the story to know where he is going. “Like *you* took *me* in!”

“Exactly like that,” Mike agrees, his hand finds her’s. “The King took her in and he gave her a real name and he gave her words.”

Eleven frowns. “And she was happy?”

“They both were,” Mike says.

“Until she left.”

“She came back though,” Mike reminds her.

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“The story is about us.”

It is not what Mike is expecting to hear during one of their 1am conversations. He expects more confessions about her old living conditions, triggered by her still present nightmares. He never thought she would put 2 and 2 together even though she is just as smart as him.

“What story?”

“Don’t play dumb Mike,” Eleven answers almost impatiently. “The one you’ve been telling me about the King and the Queen. It’s about *us*!”

“Maybe I borrowed a few real life events. . .” Mike says cautiously.

“Friends don’t lie,” Eleven reminds him, whipping out a phrase she hasn’t used in ages. “It’s a good story Mike.”

Mike blushes and doesn’t know what to say. “Yeah,” he finally agrees.

“I hope we have a happy ending,” Eleven tells him. “I like happily ever afters.”

“I do too,” Mike confesses. “Just don’t tell the guys!”

Eleven laughs.

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“Tell me something good,” Eleven begs, she’s woken up from another nightmare (they are fewer and farther between now but still part of her life). She turns on her belly and looks at Mike with expectation in her wide brown eyes.

“Once upon a time, in a faraway land a king went out riding in the rain and he found a queen without a name and without a voice and a place to call home. He rescued her and gave her words and a name and a place to live. Evil forces tried to pull them apart but they were

destined to be together and she came back to him. One day they realized they loved each other. So, they got married and spent the rest of their lives trying to create a happily ever after."

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2. things you said through your teeth (alternate)

Summary for the Chapter:

> Eleven looks at him curiously. This is a side of him that she's never seen before. She searches her ever expanding vocabulary for a describing word and comes up with jealous. A few weeks ago, she had overheard Nancy telling Steve to quit being jealous of Jonathan.

things you said through your teeth (alternate)

It's just that I'm so afraid someone might steal you away, I'd lose my mind

"What's the matter with you?" Mike asks through gritted teeth, Indiana is in the middle of a severe heat and everybody is miserable.

Eleven is standing in front of him, wearing flip-flops, a modest one-piece and one of his old Hawaiian shirts. She frowns and holds her can of Coke to her neck, trying to cool off but it's as warm as the sunshine. "What are you talking about?"

"You were flirting with Jake Perretti!" Mike answers. "I saw you!"

"I tripped over a pool float," Eleven tells him. "He was *just* helping me up! What's the matter with *you*!?"

He rolls his eyes and runs his fingers through his hair. He doesn't believe it for a second. Jake has been trying to steal her all year. He looks like Michael Schoeffing and all the girls are crazy about him but for some reason he's only had his eyes on Eleven and Mike can't stand him.

It seems like Eleven has been oblivious to his flirting and passes. Until today. He is so jealous, he can barely see straight. The guys are huddled together a few feet away from them, avoiding eye contact and listening to their conversation.

“He wasn’t just helping!” Mike insists, shooting a look in the football player’s direction. His fan club has gathered around him, a herd of gorgeous girls in a rainbow array of bikinis and tanned skin.

Eleven sighs. “We’re *friends*.”

“Friends?” Mike repeats tightly, his stomach dropping all the way to his toes. “You spend time with him?”

“What is wrong with you!?” Eleven asks again. “I spend time with Dustin and Lucas and Will.”

“That’s different! Will is your brother! You can’t not hang out with him!” Mike answers, growing hotter by the second and not just from the sun beating down on him. “Lucas and Dustin know how—”

Eleven lowers her soda and looks at him. “What are you talking about?”

Mike shrugs, his feelings for her are something he hasn’t said aloud in all the days they’ve known each other and he’s not about to tell her now. Not when they’re in the middle of an argument, surrounded by their friends and classmates and little kids begging their parents to let them go into the water.

“Mike? What do Dustin and Lucas know?”

“Nothing,” Mike lies. “Just. . . when have you found time to hang out with Jake Perretti?”

Eleven looks at him curiously. This is a side of him that she’s never seen before. She searches her ever expanding vocabulary for a describing word and comes up with *jealous*. A few weeks ago, she had overheard Nancy telling Steve to quit being jealous of Jonathan.

“Mike, are you *jealous*?” She asks carefully.

Mike scoffs. *“No!”*

Eleven studies him. “I think you are.”

“Am not!” Mike argues, sounding a lot like Holly when she argues

with her friends at school.

“He doesn’t like *me*,” Eleven assures him, too mature to respond with *yeah huh!* She nods in the direction of where he was sitting. “Why would he?”

Mike rolls his eyes. “You’re every bit as pretty as them. Maybe prettier. And you’re really smart. All those girls are only interested in the latest Madonna music video. He’d be lucky to have you and I think he knows it.”

“I don’t see him outside of school,” Eleven tells him. “Sometimes he’ll walk me to my locker after class but that’s all. I spend most of my time with *you*.”

“He wants to date you, trust me.”

Eleven beams. “You *are* jealous!”

“Am *not*!” Mike says again. “It’s not like we’re—”

He stops short and sighs. Eleven wonders what he was going to say next but decides not to ask because she knows from experience he won’t answer her.

“Why are you jealous?” she asks instead.

“If I were jealous it would be because he looks like a movie star,” Mike answers. “And how could I ever compete with that?”

Eleven takes Jake in and then studies Mike. “Well, he’s kind of boring. All he talks about is sports and cars. And I don’t think he pays attention in class. He always asks me if he can look at my notes.”

“He has to get good grades or they’ll kick him off the football team,” Mike argues. “He probably only asks for your notes as an excuse to talk to you.”

“Well, if he really knew me, he wouldn’t like me,” Eleven says like it will settle the whole argument. “He wouldn’t get me, not in the way *you* do.”

Mike knows he should stop fighting with her but he's not sure she gets *it*. He's not sure she sees how amazing she really is or how every guy she's ever met would be *stupid* for not turning their worlds upside down for her. To not understand her or try to love and fix her broken parts.

She could do so much better than *him*. A Dungeons & Dragons nerd who'd spent his summer at the library reading fantasy novels and working on a new campaign.

"Eleven—"

She shakes her head, signaling the end of the conversation. It's like she can read his thoughts, she reaches out for his hand and clasps it tightly in her's. "I like you Mike," she says.

Three letters, eight words is all it takes for his breath to catch in his throat. He doesn't know if she means if she likes him just as a friend or as something more. But it makes him feel important all the same, knowing she doesn't really like any other boy in any kind of way.

Yeah he knows she *does* like Lucas, Dustin, Will, Jonathan and Steve but they all treat her like a sister. It isn't the same thing and they both know it.

"I will *have* to talk to other boys," she tells him. "Sometimes. Try not to get too jealous!"

Mike flushes bright red. "I was *not* jealous!"

She smiles like she knows a secret. "Okay!"

"Are you two done arguing yet!?" Dustin asks loudly.

"We're being summoned," Mike says even though things aren't exactly resolved between them.

"We're good, right?" Eleven asks suddenly, anxiously.

"Yes!" Mike assures her. "Yes, *of course*!"

He can't seem to bring himself to apologize. If he does, he'll have to

admit she was right and he's too cowardly to do that. He doesn't want her to know his weakness. He'll have to fight it. She is not like other girls. She won't be swayed by movie star good looks and an expensive car.

He thinks maybe he'll be stuck with her for life.

And he's okay with that.

The End

Notes for the Chapter:

> I actually have an alternate story to this story. If you're interested in reading it, let me know and I'll post it sometime this weekend, I promise. I know I already wrote a jealous Eleven story but one of my friends in the ST fandom asked me to write jealous Mike and I cannot resist filling requests for my friends.
>
> The song is "the Jealous Kind" by Joe Cocker.
>
> I hope you'll leave a review! I'll be back soon with more.
>
> Lots of Love,
>
> Holly, 10/22/2016

3. things you said too quietly

Summary for the Chapter:

She needs to find a way to get back to him. Everything in her world is on mute without him and she can't bear the radio silence.

things you said too quietly

my darling be home soon it's not just these few hours, but I've been waiting since I toddled, for the great relief of having you to talk to

"Mike!"

She tries to get his attention in the dark, while she's in the Upside Down version of his world. She thinks he can hear her from the way he looks around the basement expectantly, his face crestfallen when he realizes she's not there.

"I'm here!" she says. *"I'm HERE! MIKE!!!"*

Willing him to talk back, to say *anything*.

He looks up again and shakes his head, not saying anything in return. She knows he is probably doubting his sanity, she is doubting her's.

She needs to find a way to get back to him. Everything in her world is on mute without him and she can't bear the radio silence.

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She returns in May, six months after she disappeared into dust and ashes in a school classroom. He has conjured her up so many times since she left, he's not sure it isn't just his imagination when she whispers his name.

He turns around in spite of himself, knowing she'll disappear as soon as he does. Knowing if he reaches out for her, she'll vanish into thin

air.

But this Eleven is not the one from his dreams. She is skinny bones and flesh. Her hair has started to grow out, a short crop of brunette. Her feet are bare and the dress is straining at the seams. She looks like she hasn't slept *ever* but to Mike she is beautiful.

"Eleven?" he asks finally daring to say her name aloud.

"Mike!" she mouths, collapsing to her knees, quiet as a mouse.

He approaches her cautiously, like one would approach an injured animal. Not wanting to startle her. He stops and kneels down beside her, shrugs out of his jacket before draping it over her shoulders. And then she is in his arms, shivering, clinging to him like her life depends on it. Sharp sobs are filling the spaces between them and Mike's not sure which one of them is crying.

"Mike, Mike, Mike!" she says over and over again, in strings of threes like the Upside Down or wherever she has been has rendered her speechless.

"I missed you, I missed you, I missed you so much!" he replies, his throat thick with tears. He doesn't want to overwhelm her with all the things he's been tucking away for the past 182.5 days. For *someday*, for her return.

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It starts to get dark when Chief Hopper catches them, still holding onto each other in the woods.

"Oh boy," he says, giving *his* coat to Mike and helping them both up, not able to pry them apart. "How long have you been out here?"

"A *long* time," Eleven answers weakly.

Hopper glances at Mike. "A *long* time?"

"I found her a couple of hours ago," Mike answers. "She must be talking about—"

Hopper nods and wonders how Eleven will react if he takes her to the hospital. He's not too keen on the idea himself. He knows Mike will fight him and that she won't understand it. The ER might just be another lab to her, the promise of latex glove puppets and tangy cherry lollipops won't convince them. She probably doesn't even know what either of those things are.

"Let's get you two Joyce's," he finally says. "Her house is the closest. I was just on my way there for dinner."

Mike nods and turns to Eleven. "We're going to Miss Byers's house," he tells her softly. "She'll bathe you and feed you."

"Stay?" Eleven asks, looking at him hopefully.

Mike points to himself. "Me?"

Eleven nods.

"I am sure Miss Byers will be more than happy to let Mike stay with you," Hopper answers for him. "Come on you two, let's get going."

Mike nods and grasps Eleven by the hand. Together, they navigate their way out of the woods.

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"Stay," Eleven repeats her request from earlier. It's so quiet, he can barely hear her. But she's patting the empty space next her, he realizes she doesn't want him to leave.

So, he joins her on Joyce's bed. Crawls underneath the blankets and lies down beside her, turning over on his side so he can watch her and the way her chest rises and falls every time she takes a breath.

Just in case.

Because he is still in a *what if* state of mind. He needs to know she's really there. That this isn't the most real dream he has ever had of her.

Eleven can sense his distress but she doesn't know if she can

articulate to him that she's *really* there. She isn't going anywhere ever again. She can't find the right words, doesn't have the energy to.

Instead she weaves her fingers through his because it's all the proof she can muster up. Porcelain meets an icy cold she wasn't expecting.

He gasps.

"Stay," Eleven says again and then a little firmer, *"Promise!"*

"I promise," Mike answers.

"No! *I* promise!" Eleven corrects him.

"Oh." Mike grins. "Okay!"

For the first time that day, she smiles at him.

For the first time that day. . . for the first time in a *long* time, he is more than certain everything is going to be alright.

She is finally where she is supposed to be and they can hear each other loud and clear.

End

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Notes for the Chapter:

> I am so sorry this is short. I've had a week from the Upside Down (in this case, it's a euphemism for "hell"). Hopefully things will start to calm down now. I'll be back with another story next Saturday. In the meantime, I hope you'll leave a review or something.
>
> The song I used in this story is "Darling Come Home Soon" by the Lovin' Spoonful. It's like the most Mike & Eleven song. But

I say that on a daily basis about 10 different songs. So, this is nothing new.

Until Next Time!

Author's Note:

The King and Queen reference in this story is of course a nod to “Heroes” by David Bowie (and beautifully covered by Peter Gabriel). I hope you’ll tell me what you thought. And I’m sorry if I’m copying anyone or “stealing” stories. It was completely unintentional.

I’ll be back (NEXT SATURDAY) with more in this series.

Until Next Time!